

The Vision of Herzl and How It Came True

Progress Toward Jewish Restoration in Palestine

ARTICLE II

By Bernard G. Richards

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"IF YOU so will, it is no fairy tale." It is the motto which the masterly projector of Jewish national rehabilitation placed on the front page of "Old-New Land," his Palestinian Utopia, conjuring up for a skeptical world an enthralling vision of Zion restored.

But "The Jewish State," published by Theodore Herzl four years earlier, or in 1896, a book dealing in a matter of fact way with the immediate Jewish problem and presenting in practical form concrete plans for the solution of the problem, at first appeared as imaginary, fantastic, unreal and fairy-talike as anything conceived in romance.

Seers, visionaries, leaders of thought, harbingers of the hope of Zion, had arisen before and even pseudo-Messiahs had come out of the dingiest ghettos to proclaim the great return, often to raise the faithful upon a crest of religious emotion, only to plunge them again in deeper despondency. One after another the rosiest of promises faded, the dream did not come true. And amidst the harsh realities of homelessness and misery the vision became ever more blurred.

The voice of the new prophet was a voice crying in the wilderness, and, indeed, how could the people recognize the prophet in this modern playwright, wit and essayist, this Viennese man of fashion, this up to date traveller and correspondent from Paris and other capitals, of scientific or skeptical attitude of mind, who knew not the tongue of the masses of the Jews and whose life was so far removed from their actual experience? The masses did not understand; even the intelligent and idealistic elements hesitated and feared as they heard the message of the new little book, which they knew now was to change the course of Jewish history. The men of wealth, the men of affairs, the practical men, were, from a national point of view, the most impractical people in the world. Few realized the living, vital force with which the message was charged and almost all were afraid of the amazing boldness of the conception.

Friend Thought Him a Madman

But the author of "The Jewish State" (who still lives in a story not merely as the maker of the dream but as the creator of the thing itself) himself tells how his book was received by one of his most intimate friends. I quote from a short autobiography, which has hitherto been unavailable to American readers:

"During the last two months of my stay in Paris I wrote 'The Jewish State,' which has afforded me the honor of a request for these biographical notes on my insignificant self. I cannot recall writing anything in such an exalted frame of mind. Heine said that he heard the flapping of an eagle above his head as he wrote certain of his verses. I, too, believe that something whirled above me when I wrote this book. I worked at it daily until it was entirely finished; my only recreation during the evenings consisted in listening to music by Wagner, particularly 'Tannhäuser,' an opera which I heard as often as it was produced. Only in the evenings when there was

no opera did I doubt the soundness of my thoughts.

"At first I had intended to circulate my little book on the solution of the Jewish problem only among my closest friends. The idea of publishing these views came to me later; it was not my purpose to begin personal propaganda for the Jewish cause. Most of my readers will be astonished to hear of this apparent change of attitude. I considered the entire matter as one which might be discussed, but not disputed. Public agitation would be my last resort in case my private advice was not heeded.

Lamented for Author's Sanity

"When I finished the book I asked my oldest and best friend to read the manuscript. While reading he suddenly burst out crying. This outburst seemed quite natural, because he was a Jew; I, too, had wept many times when I was writing it. But to my surprise he gave an entirely different reason for his tears. He thought that I had gone out of my mind, and, being my friend, my misfortune caused him much anxiety. He ran away without saying another word. After a sleepless night he returned, and urged me to drop the matter, lest everybody consider me demented. He was so excited that I promised him everything to calm him. Then he advised me to see Max Nordau and to inquire whether my plan was worthy of the thoughts of a sane man. 'I will ask no one,' was my reply. 'If my ideas make such an impression on a faithful and well informed friend, I will give up the entire matter.'

"It was then that I experienced a very serious crisis. It can only be compared to the throwing of a red hot body into water. If, indeed, the body happens to be iron, it changes to steel. 'My friend of whom I spoke above was to compute my expenses for telegrams. When he gave me the account, which consisted of a long column of entries, I saw at the first glance that he had erred in his calculations. I directed his attention to the error and he tallied the figures again, but only after three or four trials did his sum agree with mine. This little incident gave me renewed confidence. Surely my reason had not left me entirely.

"On that day began my uneasiness for the Jewish state. During the two succeeding years I lived through many, many mournful days, and I fear that many more mournful days are to follow. In 1895 I began to keep a diary; now four thick volumes are complete. Were I to publish them, the world would be astounded to learn what I have had to keep secret; who were the enemies of my idea, and, on the other hand, who stood by me.

"But one thing is certain and beyond the possibility of contradiction. The movement will continue. I do not know when I will die, but Zionism shall never die. Since the days of Basle the Jewish nation again has a national representative body; the future will bring the Jewish state in the Jewish land."

"If you so will, it is no fairy tale! But centuries of oppression had all but broken the Jewish spirit; endlessly long waiting and futile yearning had



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paralyzed the national will; persecution and suffering had deadened initiative for mass action and disenfranchisement of the large elements of the Jewish population had caused a fatal detachment from the political realities of life. Hope long deferred had spent itself in fruitless longing, and through the scattering of forces throughout the world-wide dispersion, national consciousness was fast changing into a sort of subconscious nationalism.

Israel's Light Was Nearly Extinguished

"The cumulative pressure of two thousand years of persecution and oppression," says Albert M. Hyamson, in "Palestine: The Rebirth of an Ancient Nation," "had almost extinguished the last glimmer of the brilliant light created by Israel's prophets and tended by the Jewish poets and sages of succeeding generations. So many centuries had passed since the return to Zion was promised, the experiences of the wandering Jew had been so bitter throughout the long-drawn agony, that history was beginning to merge into legend, and the reality contrasting so painfully with the hope, the annual cry at the celebration of Passover, 'Next year in Jerusalem,' had become more and more a mere formula."

But if the aspirations were declining in faith and fervor there was no doubt as to their universality nor as to the firm foundations of religious belief and national allegiance upon which they were resting. From the days of Joshua's last stand against the Romans, the heroic uprising led by the wonderful Bar Cochba, leaders had arisen in various parts of the exile to announce the return or to revive the lingering hopes. Manifesting itself at first in religious form, the messengers of Zion came forward in the guise of sages and rabbis, zealots and revivalists. There came also the claimants to Messianic attributes and from Moses of Crete to Sabbathai Zevi, of Smyrna, a long line of would-be redeemers, enraptured or deluded by mystical and ecstatic emotions roused by the magic word of Zion, came to herald the day of deliverance. Later secular leaders appeared, scholars, publicists, journalists and idealists, who

propounded various forms of Zionism before, indeed, Dr. Nathan Birnbaum had given the Herzlian movement this name.

Joseph Salvador in France, Samuel David Luzzatto in Italy, Leo Pinsker in Russia, Abraham Benish in England, Moses Hess in Germany, Nathan Birnbaum in Austria, Abraham Kalai in Croatia, Mordecai M. Noah in America—to mention at random only a few of the precursors of Jewish restoration—these and other thinkers and idealists in different lands arose independently and, in most instances, unconscious of each other to put forth the same solution of the Jewish problem, viz., the return to Zion, thus testifying to the underlying truth of the idea.

Many of the advocates of nationalism endeavored to translate their plans into action, and under the inspiration of Leon Pinsker, author of "Auto-Emancipation," and other Russian literateurs, and propelled by the anti-Jewish excess which broke out in 1881, the Palestinian colonization work of the "Lovers of Zion" was launched and carried on with considerable success. But these, as the other pioneers of the work before them, met with the same opposition and untoward circumstances, encountered the same conditions under which the author of "The Jewish State" was declared insane by his dearest friend, and the strongest influence in Jewry was, by lack of policy or political obsequiousness, exercised to deprive Jewry of influence.

Then came the man who gave a new direction to Jewish history—Theodore Herzl. It would be extravagant eulogy to say that he combined within himself the wisdom of the sage, the imagination of the poet, the firmness of will of the stern communal leader, the enthusiasm of the religious zealot, the personal charm of the most fascinating of aspirants for Messianic powers, that he possessed within his person all of the qualities attributed to his predecessors; but there is the record before us showing that he achieved what none of them did and what all of them together could not accomplish, that within the short space of eight years he re-made the history of centuries. Undoubtedly, much of his wonderful leadership was due to the ripeness of the time and to

the circumstances under which, with the rise of the spirit of modern nationalism, the Jews experienced a fresh realization of their anomalous position in society. But it is nevertheless true that his vision was larger, his understanding keener, his sense of reality stronger, his personal magnetism greater, and above all his conception bolder than that of any of his predecessors. It was not his rôle to petition for favors, to supplicate for privileges for the Jews. He proclaimed the rights of the Jewish nationality.

Stating the Jewish problem in modern political terms, he made it into a world problem, which was at once the concern of the Jews as well as the nations among which they dwelt. "It was he who brought Israel back into the family of the nations; out of a number of widely scattered fragments, sundered one from another by distance, by interests, by cultures, by surroundings, by sentiment, he formed again a nation." Yet he, too, touched by "the modern malady," false assimilation, had become estranged from his people.

The Dreyfus Case Showed Jewish Insecurity

There was a sudden return to his Jewishness before he beckoned his people to return to Zion, which has been the subject of much speculation. It is said that when he saw his oldest child growing toward manhood, he began to think how his future was involved in the future of his people. But in Paris in 1895 the clever feuilletonist and dramatic critic witnessed a great human drama enacted in a court room—"The Dreyfus Case." He realized how he and all of his brethren were affected by that play, and the fate, the insecurity and the hopelessness of the whole Jewish people were borne in upon him. The menace of anti-Semitism was ever present and was bound to persist so long as the status of Israel remained as insecure and as hopeless. Emphasizing the identical thesis of his fore-runners like Pinsker and Hess, whose works he had never read, he pointed out that complete assimilation was impossible except in such manner as will spell national suicide for the Jews and maintained that they were bound to suffer from persecution and prejudice

so long as they remained sojourners in different lands without a centre of their own. The remedy was the creation of a Jewish national home. The way to attain it was through propaganda, organization and political action.

"The distinguishing feature of Herzl's presentation," says Professor Richard Gottheil, in his book on "Zionism," "is the greater stress he lays upon the practical consummation of the plan, as compared with that of his predecessors. His general political outlook was larger and wider. He envisages the question in its totality. Notwithstanding a poetic foresight that was native in him, he writes with the pen of a politician and speaks the language of a statesman. The fire of the prophet, which lights up the writings of his German and Russian precursors, never gains the ascendancy over the cooler judgment of the practical legislator. Palestine exercises no fascination upon him. He shows no trace of a knowledge of the Chovevi Zion movement or of the various attempts made to rebuild the waste places in the land of the forefathers. Palestine is but one of various possibilities for Jewish settlement, as is Argentina or Canada. In the Jewish state there are no dithyrambs. Everywhere cool pronouncements that capture the mind rather than transport the imagination. It is for this reason perhaps that Herzl was understood of the West, and his argumentative presentation had a greater chance of success than the more elaborate disputations of previous writers. In one word, he is a cool and modern man of the world, speaking to moderns like himself."

Harkened to Call Of His People

Yet, as it was previously conjectured and as it is now conclusively proven by his own words, Herzl never intended to organize nor to lead a movement for the practical realization of the aims he outlined. As a literary man, he thought he had done his part in writing the book and presenting his views, leaving it to others to respond in such manner as they thought best. But the great truth which he had made his own, the manner of its statement, the forcefulness of the personality reflected

through the written pages and still more through the spoken word, at once subjected him to the claims of the Jewish people, which was opportunely or providentially rousing itself from a long lethargy. The master builder of the Jewish state had arrived, and he could no longer be his own master. He harkened to the call of his people and placed himself at their service. The message of the little book spread further and with greater rapidity than the author expected.

Visiting Sofia, he was welcomed by a deputation of local Jews, who hailed him as leader. The Kadimah of Vienna, a student society of Jewish nationalists, previously organized by Dr. Birnbaum, approached him with a direct offer of support, proposing the foundation of a society of Jews as outlined in the book. Through the assistance of Israel Zangwill, the first English Jew to befriend the author of "The Jewish State," Dr. Herzl was extended an invitation to address the Maccabean, a society of Anglo-Jewish professional men. Herzl addressed their meeting in July, 1896. The reception given to the speaker by the select gathering was rather disappointing, but a warmer welcome was accorded him at a mass meeting of the plain Jewish people held in the East End of London. Holman Hunt in London and Max Nordau in Paris came forward as among the earliest supporters of the Zionist idea. Gradually, and one by one, the other men of prominence and groups of Jews in different countries expressed their interest, and meanwhile earlier societies of the Chovevi Zion, or "Lovers of Zion," engaged in the work of Palestinian colonization, after considerable hesitation in accepting Herzl's aggressive political views, offered coöperation.

The idea gained strength from day to day, and the propaganda which soon extended to all the Jewish centres of Europe and America, where existing groups of latent or loosely organized societies furnished the nucleus for branches of the new movement, culminated in the convening of the first International Zionist Congress, which was opened in Basle, Switzerland, on August 29, 1897. The 204 delegates came from all parts of the world and represented every form of Jewish belief, every shade of opinion and every station in Jewish life. Despite, however, the divergence of opinion and standing of the delegates, the body was welded into a strong, harmonious organization, and under the direction of the gifted and magnetic leader the Jewish Parliament in embryo was, to the amazement and joy of an erstwhile disheartened Jewish world, brought into being.

The Nation Had Expressed Its Will

The stir that was created throughout Jewry consisted of denunciation as well as exaltation; but the Jews had expressed their will to live as a people in such terms of reality as were in keeping with the march of modern events, and so the doubters and deniers were bound to be left behind, even as those who affirmed and testified to the truth were destined to come out triumphant. With but very few exceptions the Jews of wealth in the great capitals of Europe were not among the 204 delegates; but, as Herzl himself had said, "First comes the idea. If the idea is true, then all else will follow in its train afterward." The idea that was to revivify and recreate the Jewish people was that of their national restoration; the motive that was to raise them to the height of achievement was the ancient love for Zion.

Herzl, however, in his book expressed no preference for Palestine, indicating that any available territory might be made the desired homeland. But when he tapped the spring of Jew-

ish emotion he found Zion to be the source of greatest inspiration; and, like the far-sighted leader that he was, he was willing to be led by opportunity. So the devotion to Palestine was utilized as the great asset that it was. But he would not improve the Turk's land without political guarantees, and here he differed entirely from the advocates of colonization who preceded and labored with him. The great movement for restoration in Palestine had been organized, yet he would not proceed with the work in Palestine until certain legal guarantees were secured and proper opportunities came forward. His political thought and comprehensive outlook could not be followed even by many of his faithful adherents, and hence some of the difficulties of the movement which afterward developed, and which only a man of his strength and tact could overcome.

Resolved to Weep No More

The first Congress declared "that the object of Zionism is to establish for the Jewish people a publicly and legally assured home in Palestine," and this has since become widely known as the "Basle Programme." A far-off and nebulous possibility was the realization of this programme when the "Dreamers in Congress" first sat down by the River of Basle, resolved to weep no more." But a quarter of a century of planning and working by a host of faithful followers undid the denationalizing damage of centuries of aimless wanderings. It was almost the identical language of the Basle Programme that the English government just used in making its declaration for a Jewish homeland in Palestine. Laboring with such great zeal and under such high pressure as he did, casting his personal interests to the wind, sacrificing his future and his health, travelling, speaking, organizing, writing, interviewing men of prominence, meeting and being received by kings and other heads of governments; ceaselessly working without a thought of self, Herzl, even though he had the strength of a giant, could not last more than the eight years which he devoted to the movement. When he died, in July, 1904, at the premature age of forty-four years, the plans which he had outlined in his book had taken the practical form of a chain of institutions, financial, agricultural, political, educational, and their ramifications in many countries, and the world-wide Zionist organization, having gone through all the stages of progress and transformation from the first to the seventh biennial congress, counted among the enrolled adherents thousands of societies with federations throughout Europe, America and South Africa.

During the time of its development the movement had weathered many storms and in the course of events there were periods of extreme discouragement, as when Dr. Herzl, having favorable opportunities before him, was lacking in the necessary financial backing; when later through his tragic death a whole people was left grief-stricken and the organization was for a time floundering for lack of leadership; again when the great war broke out, disrupting the organization abroad and bringing much suffering and uncertainty of future to the Jewish people. "But he slumbereth not nor sleepeth, the Watcher of Israel."

The darkest hours were soon dispelled by new ways of hope; new forces, new men, came forward, and out of the very crisis new leadership was born. The movement grew from strength to strength, and on November 2, 1917, the statement of a great empire confirmed the faith expressed in the words of Dr. Herzl, "That the future will bring a Jewish state in the Jewish land."

American Melting Pot Already Diluting Jewish Religion and Race

By D. M. Hermalin

CURIOUS marriage ceremony took place last week on the lower East Side of Manhattan.

Esther Lifshitz, the nineteen-year-old daughter of Samuel Lifshitz, an orthodox Jew, was married to John D. Sylvester, a full-fledged American Gentleman.

The strangest thing about it was that the marriage ceremony was performed in the bride's home. Father, mother, uncles and aunts and numerous other relatives were present. An orthodox rabbi performed the ceremony and made the bridegroom repeat in pure Hebrew:

"Hare ah m'kudesheth li b'tabaah zu k'dath Mosheh V'Israel."

In the translation it would mean: "Thou art sanctified unto me with this ring according to the law of Moses and Israel."

There was no secret. Everybody present knew that the young bridegroom was a Christian, and he had refused to embrace Judaism at the solicitation of Esther and her relatives.

He agreed, however, to a Jewish marriage ceremony.

Intermarriage Daily Occurrence Now

The entire affair went off without a ripple in the life of Jewish orthodoxy on the East Side. The reason is that such things occur on the East Side, in Brownsville, Williamsburg, Harlem, the Bronx, or wherever Jews in New York have settled in large communities.

Although it is almost a daily occurrence now, still, only three years ago it would have been considered a miracle. Jewish immigration has practically come to a stop since the great World War broke out. Parents, relatives, friends and acquaintances, with orthodox notions of the Old World, are no longer coming to criticize the actions of the younger generation in America and to remind the old of its religious duties.

If Esther Lifshitz had wanted to marry her Christian suitor three years ago and he had refused to become a member of the synagogue, she would have had to leave the house of her parents and probably be disowned by them.

We wonder what would have become of the first Jewish settlers in the American colonies if German persecutions against the Jewish race had not taken place. We wonder what would have become of the Jews in America if Russia had not incited pogroms and Rumania and Austria-Hungary had not harassed their Jewish citizens.

Let us open a folio of the past and study the situation. The Portuguese Jewish refugees, or Marranos, who settled at New Amsterdam some two hundred and sixty years ago, were ready to die for the religion of their forefathers. They were the happiest of mortals when religious freedom was accorded to them in the New World. They began diligently to study the Hebrew language and Talmudic literature in the original and practised Judaism with a love and

devotion which came usually only after religious persecution.

In the course of time, however, when the children of the Portuguese Jewish immigrants grew up in an atmosphere where religion was not tolerated, they began to neglect the study of the Torah and of the Talmud. They also became lax in the performance of their religious exercises, and in the beginning of the 18th of the last century, although the Portuguese Jews in America had their synagogues and their rabbis, the attendance in the synagogues was very scanty, and their rabbis knew so very little about Judaism, that if a European Jewish arrival happened to hear a sermon of such a rabbi he would wonder whether he was at the House of Israel or a member of a Unitarian Church.

Intermarriage between Jew and Gentile was so frequent that observers could see the constant shrinkage of the various Jewish communities in America. Then German internal unrest and systematic anti-Semitism drove large numbers of German Jews to the United States. Germany was then an important centre of Jewish

learning and Jewish religious activity.

The German Jewish immigrants brought with them new Jewish life in America, remained members of the faith of their forefathers. Some of them were absorbed by the great mass of German Jewish arrivals. However, the case may be, it is a fact that the German Jews gave new impetus to the religion of the Jews in America. But, with all due respect to their religious ardor, it was comparatively short-lived. During the time of approximately forty years, German Jews in America lost even that enthusiasm which they had originally brought with them. They produced Hebrew language and literature, and their sermons were smattered with politics, philosophy and everything but Judaism.

Prominent American rabbis associated with Christian preachers, with whom they discussed the relative value of Christianity, and it was mighty hard to recognize who was who. Rabbis were called to perform marriages between Gentile and Gentile and Christian clergymen delivered sermons in the temples. Goodness knows what would have become of Judaism in America if Czar Alexander III had not instigated his infamous pogroms, which drove hundreds of thousands of his Jewish subjects to seek refuge in this country.

True, among those arrivals there were Socialists, anarchists, atheists and other godless individuals, but there were a good many more who brought with them Hebrew thought, Hebrew poetry and the old Hebrew fervor for religion.

The influence of the new arrivals was immense. They actually made prominent American Jews feel ashamed of intermarriage, abhor flattery to Christianity, admit Jewish nationality and practise a purer Judaism than they had ever done before.

The Rabbinical Theological Seminary of Cincinnati, which was producing rabbis in the place of rabbis who had fled from persecution and prejudice

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"Physically Unfit" Can Be Saved to American Army at Trifling Cost

By Dr. John H. Quayle

Of the Vigilantes

AMERICAN arms have lost their first bout with the enemy, and lost it on American soil!

For Uncle Sam has been compelled to reject from 65 to 80 per cent of his volunteers for physical reasons, thus removing from the combat forces thousands of men between the charmed ages of twenty-one and thirty-five years, the stage in man's existence whose nature is most kind to him.

This is an economic war loss the nation cannot—must not—stand. It is an economic war loss the nation need not stand if the country will repair its man power at an expense of not more than \$50 to \$100 per man.

The individual must be raised to the requirements of the army and navy